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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES.

Baltimore, December, 1887.

THE MODERN LANGUAGES IN THE

Versammlung Deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner.

The thirty-ninth session of the Association of German Philologists and Schoolmen was held in Zürich from September 28th to October 1st. The number of members present was two hundred and fifty. In addition to this, numerous Swiss scholars and teachers attended the meetings. The faculty of the university of Zürich were the immediate hosts, though the Bundesrath and the cantonal and city authorities of Zürich united in the most generous provision to do honor to their guests and extend a munificent hospitality. For the social entertainment of the Society excursions had been arranged to the top of the famous Ütliberg, and to the island of Ufenau in lake Zürich, where Ulrich von Henthen died, also for a general banquet and a grand *Commers*, and for the performance of the 'Antigone' in the original Greek, by students of the university and gymnasium. Numerous *Festschriften*, for distribution among the members, had been published by scholars to commemorate the occasion; programmes also of the various admirable educational institutions of Switzerland, showing the high character of the instruction afforded, were at the service of the Association. The Society is divided into seven sections as follows: for the Oriental, Classical and Germanic-Romance languages; for instruction in the modern languages; for mathematics and natural science, for archæology, and for pedagogy. The early morning was devoted to the meetings of the separate sections, after which the general sessions were held.

The large number of papers which were read before the Germanic-Romance section led, some years since, to its division, without a clearly defined and separate province for each. Professor Tobler of Zürich presided over the Germanic-Romance section, and Professor Sachs of Brandenburg, over the section for instruction in the modern languages.

The subjects of the papers in these two sections were as follows:

In the GERMANIC-ROMANCE SECTION:

"Schweizerdeutsch und Schriftdeutsch in ihren geschichtlichen Beziehungen." Prof. Dr. F. KLUGE, Jena.

"Über die Windeck-Handschriften in Zürich." Prof. Dr. REIFFERSCHIED, Greifswald.

"Der Ring des Heinrich Wittenweiler." Prof. Dr. BÄCHTOLD, Zürich.

"Die Untersuchung lebender Mundarten und ihre Bedeutung für den akademischen Unterricht." Prof. Dr. MORF, Bern.

"Zur Psychologie Heinrichs von Kleist." Dr. WETZ, Strassburg.

"Das Strassburger Theater von der Reformation bis zum Anfang des 30jährigen Krieges." Dr. CRÜGER, Strassburg.

In the SECTION FOR THE MODERN LANGUAGES:

"Behandlung deutscher Eigennamen im Französischen mit spezieller Beziehung auf das Wörterbuch von Sachs." Prof. Dr. HUNZIGER, Aarau.

"Über die Biographen der Frau v. Stael." Prof. Dr. BREITINGER, Zürich.

"Lettres inédites de J.-J. Rousseau à Madame d'Houdetot." Prof. RITTER, GENÈVE.

"Die provenzalische Litteratur früher und jetzt." Prof. Dr. SACHS, Brandenburg.

"Fragen über die Organisation des neusprachlichen Unterrichts an den höhern Lehranstalten Deutschlands, Österreichs und der Schweiz." Prof. Dr. MAURER, Lausanne.

The relation of the Swiss dialects to one another and to the High German is receiving elaborate investigation in the great dictionary of Staub and Tobler, but the historical steps by which the written language of Luther supplanted the Swiss literary language of the time in vocabulary and forms has not before received any adequate presentation. Professor Kluge, of Jena, read a most interesting paper upon this subject. He sought to justify Zwingle in the use of his native Swiss-German, from the circumstances of the time. Zwingle has been censured by Luther and later by Heinrich Rückert for employing his familiar dialect in his writings at the time of the Reformation. Rückert maintains that Zwingle should have used the High German of Luther. It is not known in what language the discussions between Luther and Zwingle in Marburg, in 1529, were held. As early as 1570 the language of Luther had penetrated the district of

the Low German. Throughout the period of the Reformation the spoken language was the prevailing language. Until 1575 the Swiss dialect held almost unlimited sway in Switzerland. Luther's language had not at first the authority which it afterward acquired. There was then a great conflict against the Latin, and the struggle between the German dialects for supremacy occurred later. The Basel Bible contained explanations of words that were used in Luther's translation, as of *Hügel*, etc. The tract of Zwingle, "Von Erkiesen und Fryheit der Spysen" (Über die Freiheit der Speisen), was published in three editions in the Swiss dialect; in the fourth, it appeared in High German.

In general, it may be said that the literary language of Switzerland was not affected by Luther's High German until the end of the century. There was a gradual transition to the language of Luther, in the written language; Catechisms were published in Swiss German as late as 1595. The introduction of the new vowels may be traced from 1580. The change is first manifest in the literature, and only appears much later in the courts and records. Zürich was later than Basel in being affected by the new movement. There is apparently a striving on the part of some literary men to adopt the new language, and the movement became general in the great writers from 1720-1750, in which period the Swiss German exercises an influence upon the literary German of the North. Haller, Bodmer, Breitinger, Zimmermann, Gessner and Iselin, have numerous Swiss words in their vocabulary, and Swiss forms in their syntax. Some of these have been adopted in the present literary language. Many of them were commended by Lessing and employed by Wieland, and are to-day common property. The introduction from the Swiss of certain participial forms was cited. The attitude of Lessing toward a general German language based on the Middle German, was considered, and the part which Gottsched and the Silesian School bore in the contests of the eighteenth century was briefly considered.

A paper which awakened great interest was that of Professor Morf, of Bern, on the "Investigation of living dialects and their im-

portance in academic instruction." The Swiss cantons present an interesting field in the variety of dialects which they exhibit, and the experience of a scholar who has submitted his theories to a practical test was regarded as of extreme value. His method will perhaps suggest a system of studying and recording the dialectic peculiarities of different sections of our own country. The illustrations are taken from the study of the Romance languages, which are represented by Professor Morf.

The study of the Old French language and literature is indispensable for one who would acquire a scientific knowledge of Modern French, such as a teacher in a Gymnasium should possess. At present, however, too great stress is laid in the German universities on the study of Old French, which can and should be limited in favor of a more thorough and scientific knowledge of the Modern French language and literature. The treatment of the earlier French language and literature in lectures and exercises, finds its sphere in the value of the facts imparted which relate to the historical development of the language; the exclusive aim therefore of such study should be instruction in this historical development. In place of this, we propose the study of the dialects of the living language, which is justified in academic instruction by its usefulness,

1. In pronunciation. The dialect, that is, the familiar daily speech, which has no historical orthography and is not taught systematically, after the fashion of schools, is better adapted than the cultivated language to guide our beginner in phonetics, so that he hears sounds in a *naïve*, unprejudiced way, and hence his ear is rendered acute for the more accurate perception of the sounds of a foreign tongue. The effort to represent dialectic forms phonetically and with accuracy, is the best school of applied phonetics, and fits the student to acquire, in a later residence abroad, that which is most useful for his own pronunciation. The importance of a correct pronunciation is regarded more highly now than formerly. An error in pronunciation is an error in speaking, and violates an essential principle in language.

2. For the general linguistic training of the student. An exclusive or extreme occupation

with the phonetic stages of languages no longer spoken, involves the danger that the student will be accustomed to venture some phonetic casuistry, and that imaginary series in sound-development will be interpreted as claiming the dignity of facts.

On the contrary, the study of the living language forms a wholesome counterpoise. It deals with certain estimable phonetic values, and the variety of forms which these assume extends the horizon of the observer. The study of a living dialect shows that in the favorite Old French *Lautlehre* there is an endless amount of gray theory, which will not stand the test when examined by the living language. The latter possesses a complete linguistic material, while the investigation of the phonetic history of dead languages is always limited by the accidents which attend its transmission. The present instruction in the modern languages in our universities is apparently not sufficiently occupied with the question of scientific principles in the study of language. The best information concerning the laws of the life of language, is afforded by the study of dialects, where the speech is free from any striving for artificial effect. The future teacher should be instructed in the relation which the dialect sustains to the common language, and in the linguistic changes and sound-transformations through which the language has passed in successive generations: he should be free from the powerful prejudgments of linguistic pedagogy. The most important linguistic facts can only be studied in *naïve*, dialectic speech. Although in principle every dialect is adapted to this study, yet for the student of Romance philology a Romance dialect is to be preferred, and especially some dialect of French. In the Romance Seminary of the University of Bern, during the winter semester of 1886-7, several *patois* of the French-Provençal Canton of Freiburg (Courteprin, Grolley, Dompierre) were investigated and discussed. The speaker briefly indicated, in closing, the plan which he pursued in connection with the students of his Seminary. Every student is sent to some place, with a distinctly specified and limited task. He is provided with a phonological and morphological scheme of questions, and

supplied with proper commendations from the government. He seeks with the aid of his teacher some trustworthy individual affording the necessary guarantee of dialect purity of speech, who becomes the subject of his inquiries. The lists of words, forms and sounds which are thus obtained are reduced to a brief *Laut-* and *Formenlehre*, which is first privately discussed with the teacher, and then becomes the subject of a public debate. The forms obtained are compared with other forms of the written or spoken language. The use of a definite word-list in the investigation of different dialects forms a basis of, and facilitates, comparison. By the publication of such special investigations, directed by the teacher and afterward carefully verified by him on the spot, contributions of great value to science will be made, yet these should always be subordinate to the aims of instruction. To Bern belongs the honor of organizing systematically and carrying out this method of investigation.

The paper of Professor Maurer was a plea that the study of the social life, culture and institutions of a people should be associated with the study of its literature, and that instruction should not limit itself to a mere verbal knowledge but should likewise aim to impart a knowledge of facts.

Certain questions which he proposed as to methods of instruction, and the demands of civil examiners in the modern languages, were referred to the next session of the Modern Language Association, which will be held in Dresden in 1888.

It was resolved that in university education as well as in all professional and State-examinations, more stress should be laid upon a knowledge of the modern languages and literatures, and upon the history of modern culture, and national life.

The formation of a Modern Language Association in Switzerland in connection with the "League of Teachers of the Gymnasias," in order to promote intercourse between German and Swiss scholars who are interested in this department, was recommended.

Professor Gutersohn stated the following "Contrary Propositions for the Reform of Instruction in the Modern Languages."

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION.

1. A thorough knowledge of the principles of phonetics is essential to the student and teacher of the modern languages.
2. In instruction in the schools, the results of phonetic study should be considered only so far as they are necessary to the correct and sure pronunciation of unfamiliar and difficult sounds and combinations.
3. By the introduction of special phonetic characters, without the use of the ordinary printed letters, and by basing the *Formenlehre* upon the spoken instead of the written language, the memory of the pupil is burdened and his mind confused.
4. As the acquisition of a foreign language is a process of psychological perception, viz., the appropriation of new words and forms for already existing conceptions, an essentially synthetic mode of proceeding in instruction is to be adopted in the beginning.
5. That method which has grown up during the historical development of instruction in language, is to be recognized as natural and psychologically correct; it leads gradually from the simple to the compound, from the easy to the difficult, hence from the letter or sound to the word, then to the sentence, and finally to connected extracts in reading.

SECOND STAGE OF INSTRUCTION.

6. The analytical method of instruction, which begins with connected pieces for reading, and favors exercises in speaking, which are so necessary, must be given prominence at the earliest possible moment.
7. Grammar is to be treated inductively in all stages of instruction, and regard must be paid to this requirement for its presentation in the text books. Rules are to be limited strictly to that which is essential and actually necessary.
8. "The section does not intend by the adoption of the foregoing theses to oppose reform in the field of the modern languages: it desires simply to affirm that a method of instruction tested by experience is worthy of a careful and extended consideration and defence."

The author strenuously opposed the demands which are made by extreme phoneticists in prescribing the method of instruction in the schools. He held that the sound and letter cannot be separated, if the child is to acquire clear and positive conceptions. For this reason phonetic writing, or the use of signs of sounds, is to be opposed. While recognizing the value of phonetics from a scientific stand-point, he rejected the prevalent theories as to the prominence which it should have in elementary training. The process of learning requires the constant union of the analytic and the synthetic methods, as understood in scientific pedagogy; thus only can new terms and conceptions take their proper place beside already existing names and ideas. This process would require that connected extracts should be read earlier than has hitherto been the case, and conversational exercises based upon them should form early a feature of the instruction. He condemned the excessive accumulation of a mass of rules, as in many grammars. Instruction should not presuppose too great capacity in the pupils at the beginning; and simple, elementary text-books are to be commended. The theses of the speakers were slightly amended in form and adopted as given above.

The paper by Professor Sachs described the people and language of Provence, and sketched the lives and works of the different poets, and the guilds or societies for the preservation of the language. Other papers of interest were technical in character. Of these I shall not attempt a report.

W. T. HEWETT.

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VOLAPÜK.

Menade bal—One mankind.
Püki bal—One language.

The word *Volapük*, when it first strikes the ear, is apt to produce the sensation of a prick with a pin, accompanied by slight bewilderment of thought. It sounds familiar and yet conveys no idea. What is it? Its literal meaning is *The World's Speech*. And when and how did this Language of Mankind origi-